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THE HOLIDAYS ARE HERE...

CHRISTMAS ARRIVES IN THREE OAKS

— PAGES 10-11 —

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Residents appointed to Chikaming's STR committee

BY FRANCESCA SAGALA

Members of the Chikaming Township Board of Trustees appointed five members of the community to a review committee regarding short-term rentals at their Thursday, Dec. 4, meeting.

The board extended the moratorium on new Short Term Rental licenses during a Nov. 24 meeting for an additional 30 days, expiring now on Feb. 9. During this moratorium period, only properties with valid or pending 2025 licenses prior to Oct. 9, 2025, will be allowed to renew for a 2026 license.

Board members were asked to submit their recommendations on who should serve on it.

Chikaming Township Supervisor David Bunte added that the committee will not be a "decision-making format."

"They're going to go through everything we've compiled to date and then give recommendations based on all their findings and all data and discussions they've had," he said.

Based on the following details, board members agreed the following residents will serve on the committee: Mark Stables, who has a background in commercial real estate and followed STRs across the world; Cathy Calhoun, who sits on the Gowdy Shores Homeowners Association Board, which has gone through a similar process for the past two years; Tyler Ream, who went through a similar process while on the Three Oaks Village Council; Jason Milovich, who has a background in the management company community and Fran Wersells, who frequently attends meetings and helped secure a grant with parks director Joe Martin.

Board members approved the appointments in a 4-1 vote, with trustee Rich Sullivan voting "nay."

Sullivan said the only recommendations with a brief bio that were submitted to the board were his and Bunte's.

"You (Bunte) instructed us to pass on information to all board members," he said.

Also serving on the committee will be police chief Todd Taylor, fire chief Allan Weich, code safety official Steve Torres and township attorney Charles Hilmer.

Board members heard an update on the Red Arrow Regional Emergency Services Authority.

In June, a joint meeting was held at the New Buffalo Performing Arts Center with township and city officials, as well as their respective fire chiefs, on the potential authority.

Fire departments from three municipalities are in discussions regarding next steps on the potential authority: the City of New Buffalo, Chikaming Township and New Buffalo Township, with Weich saying that Three Oaks Township has "elected not continue participating in those discussions and maybe look elsewhere for some other effort like that."

Weich said it was two years ago when discussions arose on long-term issues regarding emergency services. Staffing is a main concern, as Weich said participation with paid on-call fire department is not like 20-30 years ago.

A potential budget was distributed to board members. Wiech said it came from recommendations from a work group and the various discussions that have been held for the past two years, as well as from looking at other authorities in Michigan.

He said a second legal opinion has been sought regarding the transferring of assets.

A tentative meeting with the participating municipalities' boards will be held Jan. 28 at the New Buffalo Township Public Safety Building.

Board members approved a Memorandum of Understanding for Berrien County Mobile CAD Integration for police and fire.

During public comment, Sawyer resident and short-term rental owner Jason Sutton said that he's one of the ones who's "in the limbo with this moratorium of selling my house."

"I think I've described before that its cost me a quarter of a million dollars by waiting and this contract may actually fall out because it's only extended to the 23rd of January," he said.

Calling the extension "unrealistic," Sutton said the moratorium is "costing me a good amount of money, it's costing my dreams of trying to further a business in Stevensville, Michigan."

Sutton added that the house was supposed to close Nov. 7; however, the original moratorium pushed that to Jan. 8, and the extension now pushed that to February.

Lydia, a Chikaming business owner, asked if nominees for the committee own a business inside Chikaming, what's the age range of the committee and what percentage of them would "be considered retired or unemployed, as in no longer working to earn an income."

Mitch Mammina, a principal for Sawyer Homes and resident of Sawyer, said that at the last meeting, a board member said with regards to the proposed project that "although he's in favor of housing and growth he didn't think it was a very good idea to have it in the position where we were zoned at," which is in AG District. The board member said a better area would be across from the school, which is also agriculture zoned, he said.

Mammina said that their proposed location is next to R-1 and .3 miles from the Town Center, while the location across from the school is 4.8 miles. Their proposed location also has other amenities that aren't across from the school, such as municipal water, storm sewer, gas and sanitary sewer.

Calling it the "heart of Chikaming Township," Mammina added Sawyer has "two gas centers, two truck stops, four food stores, one hotel, three restaurants a coffee shop, all east of I-94 - it's got two churches and a school…If not there, where?"

In life, self-control may bring the most good. — *Dino N. Fatouros*

Local Government Meetings

New Buffalo Times

Democracy Requires Transparency

CITY OF NEW BUFFALO
VANCE PRICE, MAYOR
CITY COUNCIL
MARK ROBERTSON, ROGER LIJEWSKI, KAREN GEAR, RICH KNOLL, VANCE PRICE
City Council meets on the 3rd Monday of each month at 6:30PM
CITY OF NEW BUFFALO PLANNING COMMISSION MEETINGS
Meets on the 1st Tuesday of each month at 5:30PM
NEW BUFFALO TOWNSHIP BOARD
HOWARD MALES, MICHELLE HEIT, MICHELLE HANNON, PATTY IAZZETTO, BARBARA ANDERSON
Board meets on the 3rd Monday of each month at 4PM
NEW BUFFALO TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
Meets on the 1st Tuesday of each month at 6:30PM
SHERIFF BERRIEN COUNTY
Sheriff, Chuck Heit
Undersheriff, Greg Sanders
NEW BUFFALO AREA RECREATIONAL AUTHORITY
Meets at 9AM on the 2nd Wednesday of every other month (odd) at New Buffalo Township Hall, 17425 Red Arrow Highway New Buffalo
NEW BUFFALO AREA SCHOOLS BOARD
LISA WERNER, JOHN HASKINS, DENISE CHURCHILL, JENNIFER SUMMERS, VANESSA THUN, STEPHEN DONNELLY, GREG VOSBERG
The Board meets on the 2nd and 4th Mondays of each month at 6PM
CHIKAMING TOWNSHIP
CHIKAMING TOWNSHIP BOARD
DAVID BUNTE, PAULA DUDIAK, LIZ RETTIG, RICHARD SULLIVAN, ARTHUR ANDERSON
Chikaming Board meets on the 2nd Thursday of each month at 6:30PM
CHIKAMING TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
Meets on the 1st Wednesday of each month at 6:30PM
THREE OAKS
THREE OAKS TOWNSHIP BOARD
Meets on the 2nd Monday of each month at 7PM
VILLAGE OF THREE OAKS BOARD
Meets on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 7PM
GRAND BEACH
Meets on the 3rd Wednesday at 5PM EST
KIMBERLY WOLNIK, CLERK-TREASURER
HARRY WALDER, JACK GRACE, ED SEBASTIAN, PETER DOERR, EDWARD BRANDES
MICHIANA
VILLAGE OF MICHIANA COUNCIL
Meets on the 2nd Friday of each month at 1PM

Berrien County Health Department provides food safety tips for holiday Gatherings

As community members prepare for holiday gatherings, the Berrien County Health Department is offering food safety tips to help make sure the season is healthy and festive for everyone.

"The Berrien County Health Department is committed to helping our community enjoy the festive season safely," said Nick Margaritis, BCHD's environmental health manager. "With so many holiday gatherings on the horizon, it's important to remember that food safety is just as important as the celebration itself. By following a few simple steps, everyone can help prevent foodborne illness and keep the focus on good company and great food."

BCHD is providing the following food safety tips for holiday gatherings:

- Wash your hands often with warm, soapy water for at least 20 seconds.
- Clean all surfaces where food will be prepared or consumed with hot, soapy water.
- Clean your cooking utensils after each use with warm, soapy water, especially after handling raw meat, poultry and eggs.
- Keep food cold and under 41 degrees until it's ready to be cooked or consumed. Bacteria grow rapidly between the temperatures of 41 and 135 degrees.

When cooking foods like poultry, meat and seafood, always use a food thermometer to ensure they have reached a safe internal temperature before serving. Proper cooking helps prevent harmful bacteria from causing illness.

According to Margaritis, safe minimum internal temperatures are:

- Poultry (whole or ground) – 165 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Ground meats such as beef, pork, lamb or veal – 160 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Fresh beef, pork, lamb and veal, including steaks, chops and roasts – 145 degrees Fahrenheit, with a three-minute rest time.
- Fish and shellfish – 145 degrees Fahrenheit.

For additional food safety tips and detailed temperature charts, visit www.foodsafety.gov.

In addition to providing food safety education to community members, BCHD inspects all licensed food establishments at a frequency required by law and works closely with new food businesses before they are licensed to ensure compliance with health codes. BCHD also investigates all reported cases of foodborne illnesses.

Community members are encouraged to report any concerns about foodborne illnesses to BCHD – whether related to a business or a private gathering – by visiting bit.ly/4jKm5iH or calling 269.927.5623.

Learn more about BCHD's food inspections and other services offered by its Environmental Health team at www.berriencounty.org/753/environmental-health. — STAFF REPORTS

BAKE SALE TO BENEFIT THE REGION OF THREE OAKS MUSEUM

For those developing a holiday sweet tooth, The Region of Three Oaks has the answer— a bake sale at Three Oaks Heritage Hall (8 E. Linden Street).

Between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 13, the museum will be offering a great selection of Christmas goodies, with all proceeds going to benefit the museum.

The Region of Three Oaks Museum is a 501 (C) (3) nonprofit organization dedicated to the preservation and presentation of the history of our area. — STAFF REPORTS

AI is probably the most important thing humanity has ever worked on. I think of it as something more profound than electricity or fire.
— Sundar Pichai

Christmas at Pioneer Land as strong as ever

BY STAN MADDUX

Turnout was strong again for the 28th annual Christmas at Pioneer Land over the weekend judging by the number of free cups of hot chocolate served to visitors at the new La Porte County Farm Bureau cabin in the 1800s type village.

"We probably went through 3,000 cups of hot chocolate. That's what we did last year. It seemed like it anyways," said La Porte County Farm Bureau President Mark Parkman.

The village consisting of more than a dozen buildings decorated with lights at the La Porte County Fairgrounds was open Saturday and Sunday from 3-8 p.m.

Each day, Drew Swanson and Jacob Parkman, who are members of the Farm Bureau Young Farmers group, started making the hot chocolate about one hour before the event started and made more during the festivities to keep up with demand.

They boiled the water inside a large container, stirred in the hot chocolate mix in the back of a trailer and carried it a short distance to the cabin, where it was served in Styrofoam cups by Farm Bureau members Kayla Myers and Nancy Parkman.

The cabin jam packed at times is where free bags of popcorn were also served to visitors, who sometimes hung around to warm up with help from wood burning in the fireplace.

Members of the Future Farmers of America chapters at New Prairie and South Central high schools helped make the popcorn, which started being popped each day at 12:30 p.m. so there was never a risk of running out.

"If we don't do that, we can't keep up with it," Parkman said.

FFA students from Westville High School were also in the cabin selling beef sticks.

Pioneer Land Manager Darla Quinn couldn't have been happier with the number of people who came out for what continues to be a popular early in the season tradition.

"It's still going strong," she said.

There were also lines of children waiting to see and talk to Santa Claus inside the Artisan Barn.

Santa Claus also made himself available for pictures after each visit, adding to what's already a special atmosphere throughout the village whose other structures include a working blacksmith shop, general store and one room schoolhouse.

Cookies and hot cider were served in another log cabin, which was the first structure built in the village founded in 1995.

"They were coming in and out of the cabin as fast as we could serve them cookies," Quinn said.

The new Amish built Farm Bureau cabin sits exactly where the organization's old cabin stood.

The old cabin moved a short distance is used now as a diaper changing/breast feeding station for mothers during their visits to Pioneer Land, which is also open during the La Porte County Fair.

Farm Bureau members have continued the long tradition of serving traditional and chocolate milk for .25 cents a glass from the new cabin during the fair.

Turnout didn't seem to be hurt much on Sunday when the decent conditions on Saturday turned windier with blowing snow.

"It's a great experience. I'm looking forward to next year and doing it all over again," Quinn said.

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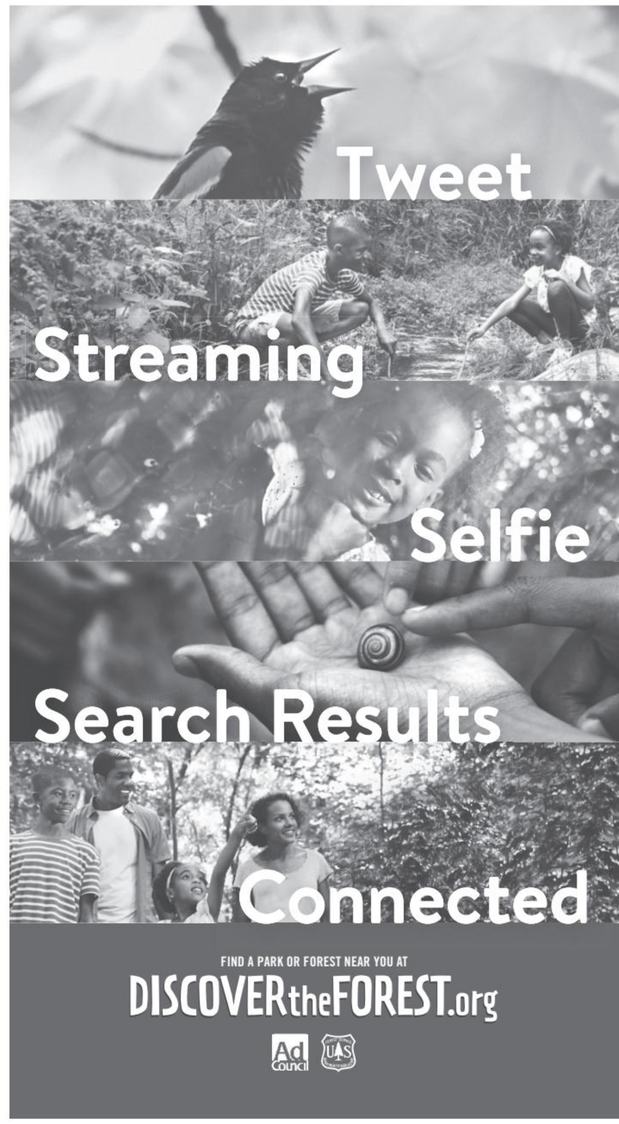

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SCHOLASTICS

Leaders outline district's Strategic Plan goals

BY FRANCESCA SAGALA

Leaders from various departments outlined annual goals that feed into the district's Strategic Plan at the New Buffalo Area Schools Board of Education's Monday, Dec. 8, meeting.

Focusing on the Academics Pillar, Elementary School Principal Melissa Lijewski said that last year, 81 percent of students were proficient in the ELA state assessment, and the goal is to "maintain or increase those scores this year." A coach from Berrien RESA has been working with teachers every month on Think SRSD, which teaches "students how to plan, write and revise their response to reading."

Also focusing on Academics, Middle School Principal Dan Caudle said teachers have been "working through creating a more viable and guaranteed curriculum." During monthly influential data meetings, math, English language arts, science and social studies teaches have been showing data from student assessments, which have led to discussions about "ways to reteach or reassess on the specific standards students are low on." The school improvement team creates questions each week based around formative assessments and "how we can take the next step in math and English on state standardized tests."

High School Principal Tracy Ripley said the high school has also been working on Guaranteed Viable Curriculum, focusing this year primarily on formative assessment. Monthly Data Digs involve reviewing the data from the classroom assessments and the Four Core to strategize how to intervene. End of the day advisory times target Tier 2 and 3 interventions, "specifically based on data that's coming out of those classroom intervention and formative pieces," Ripley said.

Speaking on the Growth and Sustainability pillar of the strategic plan, Director of Curriculum Sam Stine said he plans to develop and publish a master curriculum cycle. Regarding Culture and Community, he's implementing a comprehensive anti-bullying program for pre-K through 12th grades. Another goal is to enhance student wellness and safety by implementing a "developmentally and age-appropriate preventive program" that will be focused on "healthy decision making at each grade level."

Regarding the Culture and Community pillar, Tom Whitsel, director of transportation, said he'd like to promote more "inclusivity" in the department by implementing more routine meetings with staff.

Aligning with the Growth and Sustainability pillar, Mark German, director of operations, said that this fall, the department partnered with SitelogIQ to complete a full inventory of district facilities that will lead to a five to 10 year facility plan.

Aligning with the Culture and Community Pillar, Diane Hyatt, special education director, said she plans to implement a Best Buddies program, which will "build leadership skills with nondisabled peers by allowing them to make decisions and interact with disabled peers to vote on an activity and implement an activity outside of school."

Susan Martinic, director of food service, said they've been working on Culture and Community pillar by building a culture where hires are working together in the kitchen and inviting families and friends in for themed meal days in the elementary school.

BASE (Bison Afterschool Enrichment) Director Madeline Selby said they've been tackling the Culture and Community pillar introducing BASE "Unplugged," which removes electronics from BASE and "engages students in trying new things and meeting new people."

Aligning with the Community and Culture pillar, Jacob Stella, director of technology, said they're utilizing the Bloomz PBIS and School Messaging Platform, which centralizes communication for pre-K through 12th grades and athletics.

Aligning with the Growth and Sustainability and Culture and Community pillars, Kate Nicolai, daycare director, said that she's implemented a "shout-out system" where staff members can recognize their achievements and is investing in professional development. She's also met with community partners and is "exploring fundraising and collaboration opportunities with ongoing check-ins."

Athletic Director Matt Jonson said they're looking into is to recognizing community partners in various ways, such as having the radio class highlight local businesses on air that have "have helped out with the school system."

Superintendent Adam Bowen said that a leader/coach from Studer Education provides each leader "with different strategies and skills" to help them lead their respective departments.

"This year, at the end of the year, we will reflect on all these annual goals that feed into the big strategic plan and as a team and department we'll come up with new, annual goals for next year," he said.

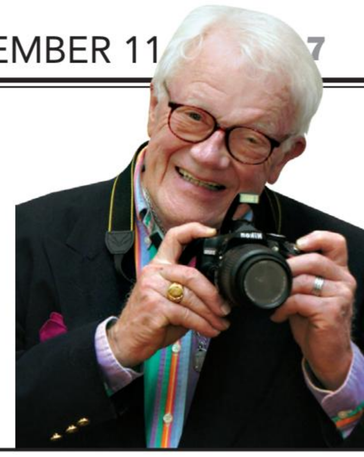
Board members approved the use of categorical funds provided under Section 27l(2) of the State School Aid Act for educator compensation and for support staff compensation.

Board approved Off-Schedule Compensation for Support Staff.

Board members approved the resolutions complying with the Publicly Funded Health Insurance Contribution Act (152) for the medical benefit plan coverage beginning Jan. 1, 2026, which includes District Employees paying 20% and New Buffalo Area Schools paying 80% of the premium, in lieu of capping the premium.

Board members approved the 2026 Daycare Handbook and Childcare Financial Contract and 2026-2027 calendar.

Board members approved fundraising for the junior class prom, which will be on May 2 on a cruise in Chicago. Fundraising will include a giveback dinner at a restaurant and some bake sales.



A Day in the Life

GIFT GIVING CHALLENGES...

BY LAWRENCE VON EBELER

It's that time of the year when a long tradition takes place. Who doesn't know that? There goes our "cutting back spending money" program. That almost always despairs us and the perfect gift challenges hits us while we are trying to shop frugally if not practical in our own way. I am not one to take rules to shop, it takes away some of the fun, but I try nonetheless. Practical has never been a word to identify me. What I say and pledge to do are often unobserved when I am faced with being "practical", one of my least favorite words in the dictionary for Christmas shopping, and any other budget conscientious efforts. I Hate it!

In my working years I designed Museum stores. retail stores, and the occasional home, all of which had a budget to deal with but not as constrained as budget Christmas shopping requires, or at least we try to be budget conscious. I took pride in my reputation for maintaining budgets, that's because it was required in all cases. The one exception was the Metropolitan Museum of Art where everything had to be the best and that was happily well accomplished. It was for obvious reasons since they are the biggest and the best in any category.

I was not by nature given to ultra budgeted projects, so I avoided them. I could and did generate the reputation in some instances for being very frugal. That sensitivity sometimes was a negative when the project was over budget which was not good when it was a chain of stores. We lived through it but not without sweating a lot of bullets first. The client ended up happy and so was I when the lighting that was so expensive ended up being a favorite element. That was when track lighting came into the market and only one company had the fixtures. Details!

I did an upscale women's store in Houston which had a mezzanine at the top of a flight of stairs. Knowing that no one likes to go up stairs, especially women in heels, I had mirrors hand cut for a baby grand piano to help draw them up the stairs. It was gorgeous. The store was chosen for part of the set design in a feature movie and they used the baby grand for one of their featured love scenes. I can't remember the name of the movie of course, but I recall a first-run type I recall.(So much for my sharp recall.)

Getting back to Christmas shopping; I have a bizarre philosophy for

Christmas shopping. You might have guessed. I don't want to give pajamas and socks or neckties and shirts. I like to get something the recipient would not expect but be surprised and pleased with what they got. (The latter is the trick.) I may have some latitude because of my creative nature.

Last year I got my nieces and nephew an electric train under the tree and set it up before they came down for the gift exchange so that it was running under the tree when they arrived. Obviously, it was to better enhance the sense of a traditional Christmas. It worked, they cried.

I like to give "his and hers" bathrobes which are something most people love and it's easy for sizing. Matching ones for Mom and Dad is a hit too. Especially if you have them embroidered "Mom" and "Dad".

University sweatshirts are always a hit. Canvas carry-on bags with great designs are very popular for any family member if it has the proper look and design, and then put an extra gift inside of it, like a school mug from Dad's old university and the same for the kids who qualify in age.

A framed print of the family is always a hit, especially when framed nicely and a great family photo, if you happen to have one to blow up and is special and maybe printed with umber ink, or an antique looking print. Make it large for impact. They won't be able to thank you enough.

I always like to give something to eat too. Special steaks from that famous company that are popular like Omaha steaks. Speaking of food gifts, a homemade pecan pie is always great!

I once got my friends in the country little Bantom chickens. They had built a chicken coop but never got any chickens. They loved the colorful little chickens like the ones I had back home on the farm. I kept them for a few days until I could deliver them, and they drove me crazy.

If it's a couple, get them dinner out at a special restaurant. Timothy's is always popular, if you can stand the noise level (that's on purpose by design to make it sound busier). Make the reservation early when it's not as busy. Ask for the bar booths or tables. Noisier but fun.

I like the idea of a trip somewhere like to Meijer's Gardens in Grand Rapids and Detroit has turned into something special with all of its new buildings and stores. (I'd like to see that too, since I lived there during the rough years. I would suggest a train ride! It's such a luxury with the dining car, the views, etc ., and fun compared to driving a car for long hours.

So much for suggestions on gifts.

I wish for you to have a very Merry and Meaningful Christmas...they tend to dissipate for us older folks, except for me. I'm a nutcase and I have my tree lit up and decorated all year. My Christmas Village is all over the baby grand. There is my massive, beautiful decorative garland focal point on the front porch railing. I'd like even more lights. I don't suggest one of those projected graphics that move across the entire home with loud music endlessly, not my favorite.

But the holidays are not moments to be critical.

Christmas Greetings and May God Bless You All!

Bison stampede Mustangs in boys basketball

BY STAN MADDUX

The New Buffalo High School boys' basketball team soundly defeated River Valley High School 65-20 on the road Friday, Dec. 5.

The victory followed a season opening 76-50 loss on Dec. 2 to a much better Phoenix High School squad at Kalamazoo.

Interim Head Coach Nate Tripp, Jr. said minor changes seemed to pay dividends offensively and defensively in the match-up against the Mustangs.

"We just tweaked a couple of things. We made an adjustment in the starting line-up and I think we got a better chemistry flow," he said.

Tripp, a former Bison player and head coach of the boys' junior varsity basketball team, is filling in for his father, Nate Tripp, Sr., until his expected return before Christmas from a health-related matter.

The Bison with help from buckets by sophomore Colten Lijewski and seniors Sam Tripp and Lucas Forker jumped out to a 10-4 lead.

After a free throw from the Mustangs, the lead was soon extended to eight points on a deep three-point bucket from Tripp.

The Bison ended the first quarter leading 24-7 after junior John Bradshaw sank a shot between the three point and half court lines at the buzzer.

There was no let up from the Bison in the second quarter, who pulled ahead 33-9 nearly halfway through the period on a short turn around jump shot from Forker and another three-point shot by Tripp.

The next four points for New Buffalo came from senior Trevor James hitting a short bucket after grabbing a nifty cross court pass from Lijewski then after a steal taking the ball in for a lay-up.

The Bison went into halftime leading 45-11 with the final first half bucket coming from another three-point shot by Bradshaw.

Forker led the Bison with 19 points while James and Tripp had 13 and 11 points respectively.

Bradshaw had eight points while Lijewski and senior Brysun Perry each scored six points.

Tripp said the well-balanced attack resulted from all of the players being involved in moving the ball on offense.

"It was great," he said.

Tripp said filling in for his father opened the door for him to realize a dream of being a varsity high school basketball coach.

"It's super fun. He's going to be back very soon. I'm just stepping in to help for now," he said.

From the Bleachers

COLUMN BY KURT MARGGRAF IN CHICAGO

For once, the game lived up to the hype.

All week long, pundits were talking about Bears coach Ben Johnson's preseason press conference when he said how fun it's been to beat the Packers, and their coach, two times a season as the offensive coordinator of the Detroit Lions.

Someone even said that the Packers had to purchase more bulletin boards in order to have more room to display all of the perceived slights the Bears hurled at their biggest rival.

As a Bear fan, I got a kick out of the poor, thin skinned Packers and their fans. The same Packers that encouraged one of their defensive linemen to throw Bears quarterback Jim McMahon to the ground long after the whistle blew.

The same Packers that sent an insignificant defender to level Bear fullback Matt Suhey about five seconds after the play was whistled dead. The same Packers who's quarterback was such a poor sport that, after a close game, he told the Bears and the entire city of Chicago that he owned them.

The hits on McMahon and Suhey were two of the dirtiest plays I've ever seen in any sporting event. I'm so happy the rivalry is real again.

Moving to the present, I think the Packers are afraid of the Bears.

Today, the Packers won, but in two weeks they play again, this time in Chicago. The game today was very close and could have gone either way. The same will probably happen when they play again.

Bears coach Ben Johnson is a rookie head coach and will get even better with experience.

Second year quarterback Caleb Williams needs a bit more experience, but I believe he will be a superstar.

The first half of the game was dominated by the Packers, but as the game moved into the second half, the Bears took control and had the Packers on the ropes.

The team from Wisconsin was huffing and puffing as the Bears ball control took over. They came very close to pulling out another fourth quarter, come from behind victory.

I'm very aware that injuries play a huge roll in the fortunes of all NFL teams, and all teams have reserves who must step up. I'm not sure how the Bears injuries this season compare with the rest of the league, but it seems like they've been hit especially hard, especially on the defensive side of the ball.

Great coaching of defensive players, both starters and reserves, and a lot of hard work, have lessened the impact of the injuries.

Offensively, the left tackle position has been hit really hard. The starter on opening day had a minor injury and the second stringer stepped in and was better, but he too had a minor injury and now the third stringer has become the first stringer.

Booker T. Washington said, "Excellence is to do a common thing in an uncommon way."

Be kind. Talk to you next week. Peace, love, and happiness.

I'm hungrier than those other guys out there. Every rebound is a personal challenge. — Dennis Rodman

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Decorated vehicles ride in the parade

Members of the American Legion Post 204 lead the parade

Christmas arrives in Three Oaks

BY FRANCESCA SAGALA

A parade that featured appearances by Buddy the Elf, The Grinch, Santa and Mrs. Claus and other vehicles that were decked out for the holidays heralded the Christmas season in Three Oaks Saturday, Dec. 6.

Everyone gathered along Elm Street for the parade, which had been rescheduled for that previous weekend due to last weekend's winter storm, as it made its way through downtown Three Oaks. Afterward, everyone warmed up with hot chocolate and caroling, which was led by Real Life Community Church Choir in Three Oaks, at Carver Park. Children revealed their wishes to Santa before joining their families to watch the lighting of the tree.

Becky Cluster introduces Santa to Addilyn and Grace Cluster

Everyone gathers under the pavilion in Carver Park

Three Oaks and River Valley royalty before the parade

Buddy the Elf and the Grinch march in the parade

A River Valley Schools bus drives down Elm Street

Santa and Mrs. Claus wave to paradegoers

A Goods and Heroes and Yarn Haus car rides in the parade

Carolers from Real Life Community Church lead singing at Carver Park

The tree is lit in Carver Park

Meeting with Santa in Carver Park

Students deck out the city, township hall trees

BY FRANCESCA SAGALA

As was tradition, students from New Buffalo Elementary School trooped over to New Buffalo City and Township halls to deck the trees out in handmade ornaments Monday, Dec. 8.

As a reward for their generosity, students were given bags full of treats as well as the chance to do crafts and play some Christmas-themed games, as well as to visit with the Olaf himself.

Students create ornaments at Township Hall

Students play Christmas-themed games at township hall

Township Supervisor Michelle Heit distributes goody bags

Students deck out the Township Hall tree

Students deck out the City Hall tree

Olaf greets students at City Hall

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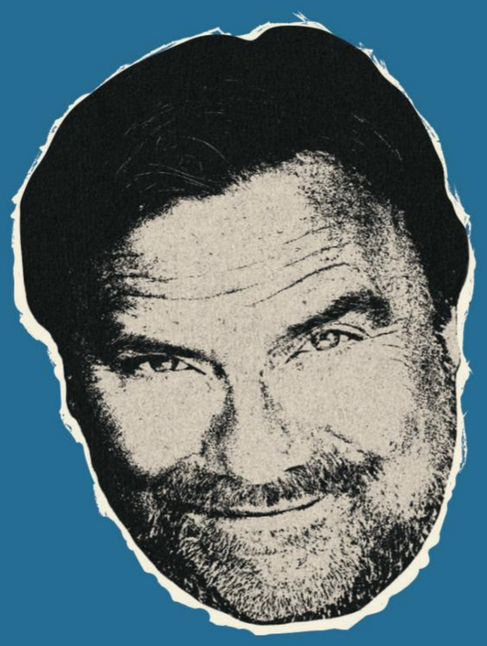
AT THE FEATHERBONE FACTORY



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Man convicted in fatal shooting of girlfriend

BY STAN MADDUX

A La Porte man has been convicted of fatally shooting his girlfriend, who was found on her living room couch with a single gunshot wound to the head.

John McCaw, 65, was found guilty of murder Thursday during a bench trial in La Porte Circuit Court.

According to prosecutors, he shot Nancy Ainsworth, 57, through a pillow at her residence in August of 2022 in the 900 block of Ridge St. in La Porte.

Police said McCaw told a 911 dispatcher he was still with Ainsworth after she shot herself by accident.

However, police said he was captured by a neighbor's surveillance camera leaving the residence about 10 minutes prior to him calling 911.

The shot was fired through a throw pillow judging from what appeared to be a bullet entry and exit hole on the pillow located near a spent 9-millimeter shell casing and the body, according to authorities.

Law enforcement agencies throughout the area were quickly notified that McCaw was a person of interest in the killing.

It wasn't long before police in Gary stopped him and found a 9-millimeter handgun on his possession.

Police also said McCaw seemed to be heavily intoxicated at the time.

According to authorities, McCaw left in the kitchen of the victim's home a suicide note apologizing to his son and explaining he can no longer deal with problems in his relationship with Ainsworth.

McCaw also wrote that he was going to say goodbye to his brothers in Michigan but, instead, he headed toward Gary.

During the three-day bench trial, McCaw acted as his own attorney but had a lawyer present to address the more technical legal matters as they arose in the courtroom.

La Porte County Prosecutor Sean Fagan said McCaw exercised the right all defendants have under the U.S. Constitution to defend themselves against criminal allegations.

Fagan said defendants serving as their own attorney happens only occasionally, though.

"Whether they want to do that or not is really up to them," he said.

McCaw could face anywhere from a 45 to 65-year sentence.

A sentencing date has not been set.

A Writer's Life...

DURING THE GOLDEN AGE OF TELEVISION ANIMATION

BY JACK OLESKER

Uh-oh...

Lisa was a young writer with a gleaming smile. With jet black hair, she looked like Archie Comics' Veronica, but without the mean-spirit. Lisa was pleasant, but new to writing. She had a Kissyfur and a Get Along Gang script to her credit.

The unspoken feeling was that she was in at DIC because she was director Michael Maliani's wife and that was okay. Everyone had to find a way to get in through the front door. Mine was through Jean Chalopin.

Michael, along with Kevin O'Donnell, was one of Andy Heyward's golden boys. Michael was on the fast track at DIC, a tremendously skilled director; movie star handsome. (And yes, I know I write about people's looks a lot, but this was the entertainment industry and even if you weren't in front of the camera, looks counted.)

As I stood in Word Processing I didn't think much about looks. What mattered at the moment was getting my M.A.S.K. script printed from my floppy disc.

Perhaps trying to over-compensate and prove her worth and knowledge, Lisa took my floppy from my hands and said, "Everyone's busy here. I'll print it for you." She slipped my floppy into a slot on the word processor, typed for a second and waited.

I looked at the computer screen, the word 'Formatting' blinking. I was still pretty low tech, so I didn't know what that meant. What I did know was that I should be seeing the word 'Printing' flashing on the screen and the Diablo printer whirring to life. I didn't.

Lisa was staring at the screen, a worried look coming over her pretty face.

When I asked, "Lisa, what's going on"?, Mike Stokey turned to me for the first time.

Lisa fumbled. "Uh...it's formatting. I th..think that's part of the printing process."

Fingers flying on his keyboard, Mike saved what he had on his word processor, got up from his chair, rushed to me and Lisa and looked at the word processor's screen, the word 'Formatting' still blinking. Stoke corrected Lisa with, "No, that's not part of the printing process." As he furiously typed on the keyboard, the word 'Formatting' stopped blinking, then disappeared. In a controlled expression of displeasure I would come to know well over the coming decades, Mike pursed his lips. His eyes still on the screen, he said, "That's not good..."

My voice trembling, I asked, "What's not good?"

As Lisa appeared to shrivel, Mike said, "The computer's formatted over your floppy."

Still at a loss, I asked, "What does that mean?"

Stoke, who clearly knew his stuff, answered, "It means the computer formatted the disc over your script so you can write on the floppy."

Panic rising in me, I said, "But I don't want to write on the floppy! I've already written on it – a half-hour M.A.S.K. script!"

Stoke looked to me with, "The computer doesn't know that. It just does what it's told."

My voice rising, I asked, "So where's my script?!" The other two word processors knowingly looked toward me.

Stoke said, "It's gone. The formatting order wiped it out."

I felt myself getting sick.

HOROSCOPE

DECEMBER 4-10, 2025

AS INTERPRETED BY SANDY "STAR" BENDT

ARIES MARCH 21—APRIL 19

The opportunities and positive vibes come from working and responding with people as unexpected situations arise, this week. It's about interacting with people in a way that helps you understand your gifts and talents more fully. Your ability to go deeper into interactions.

TAURUS APRIL 20—MAY 20

It's important to keep the mood light with friends and see past the image people try to live up to. Even though there may be some strong differences between you and them, it doesn't mean there isn't a good connection and a true feeling of camaraderie.

GEMINI MAY 21—JUNE 21

When projects get heavy and interactions with coworkers feel heated, step back and let the mood lighten before engaging further. There is a lot of good energy coming flowing and it can get out of hand if you don't honor one anothers perspectives. Hard work may be necessary now but the results will be long lasting.

CANCER JUNE 22—JULY 22

Lighten up your heart and do something different. Be more fun and outgoing with your routines. Don't shy away from friendly gatherings or winter art shows. This is the time to share you ideas and talents with others. Do things that make you feel excited about what your doing and the vibe will continue all winter.

LEO JULY 23—AUGUST 22

The energy radiating to you from the cosmos is all about taking care of your home and nurturing yourself. Don't resist the flow that separates those things that are not truly on board with you and pushes those away that don't want to be there. Let the ones that want to help come forward.

VIRGO AUGUST 23—SEPTEMBER 22

Get in the flow of communicating with partners and people you work one on one with. There may be some differences of opinion between partners and family members now and your loyalty may be put to the test. The best course of action is to be completely upfront with partners.

LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23—OCTOBER 22

Take time to communicate from the heart with siblings and friends. Your work and daily routines could be isolating you from others and leading you to bottle things up. There is a very testy energy radiating towards you that needs to be directed in order to keep it from causing arguments. Use it to set things on a better course.

SCORPIO OCTOBER 23—NOVEMBER 21

Things are really ramping up financially and the opportunity to make things last through to the spring is happening. The things that were foreshadowed in early November are coming into being now. This is the time to make moves and get things set in concrete or formalized on paper.

SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22—DECEMBER 21

Allow new information to sink in and discern whether it radiates with your core being before incorporating it into your modus operandi. The way the universal energy is expressing itself is in your connection to your family which ultimately expresses itself in the identity you create for yourself.

CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22—JANUARY 19

As much as you value your alone time, there comes a time when you must balance that solitude with social interaction. Use this winter season to catch up with old friends and neighbors. Reconnect with siblings or cousins before the family functions to bury the hatchet and laugh about the past.

AQUARIUS JANUARY 20—FEBRUARY 18

Take control of financial situations and make the good deals happen. You already have a good sense of where you belong and what to bring to the table so, invest in it. Dive into creating things that will last a long time and the right connections will present themselves. It's time to present and seal the deal.

PISCES FEBRUARY 19—MARCH 20

Your personal path is opening up nicely now. There is an ability to have more control over your self physically and emotionally now that is helping you make a better impression professionally. Hone in on any opportunities to promote your talents, business or image and go for it. It will have a lasting effect now.

The free soul is rare, but you know it when you see it - basically because you feel good, very good, when you are near or with them. — *Charles Bukowski*

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Sudoku

Fill in the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 through 9.

							6	
			8		7			
						7		9
4		1		2		9	7	
	7	5						
	8	2	6				1	5
	2		9		8		5	
					5			2
			1	4		8		6

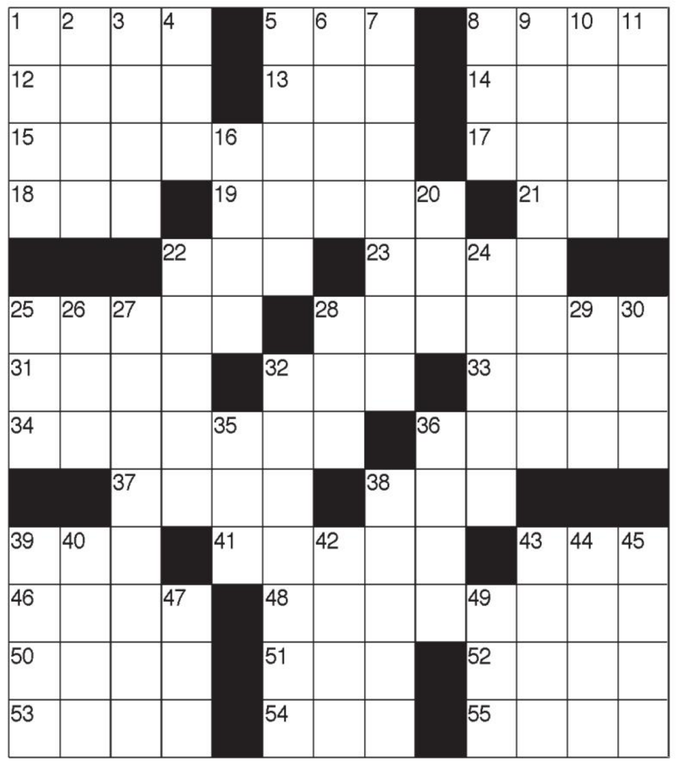
CROSSWORD PUZZLE

ACROSS

1 Chair
5 Electric reluctance unit
8 Wampum
12 Tamarisk salt tree
13 N. Caucasian language
14 P.I. food
15 Austral. island
17 "Dies ____"
18 Yale student
19 Cat
21 Confederate States of America (abbr.)
22 Tin
23 Indian music
25 Hasty pudding
28 One of the Seven Hills of Rome
31 Corn lily
32 Hindu servant
33 Carried away
34 Hold
36 Courtly
37 Yorkshire river
38 Compass direction
39 Bachelor of Fine Arts (abbr.)
41 Eagle's nest
43 Adherent (suf.)
46 You (Ger.)
48 Kipling poem
50 Ironwood
51 Container
52 Appoint
53 Hide throng
54 Scot. cut of beef
55 Rhine tributary

DOWN

1 Loathe
2 And other: abbr. (2 words) (Lat.)
3 Russ. range
4 Democrat (abbr.)
5 Encounter
6 Revise
7 Wild vanilla
8 Greek letter
9 Scala (2 words)
10 Down with (Fr., 2 words)
11 Earth personified
16 Niger-Congo language
20 Edible root
22 Racoonlike mammal
24 Medieval fiddle
25 Thus (Lat.)
26 Outside (pref.)
27 Top
28 Foremost part
29 Adjusted gross income (abbr.)
30 Resin
32 One of the Apostles
35 "Fables in Slang" author
36 Sleeping
38 Fool
39 U.S. mountain
40 Dye
42 Unusual
43 Lower intestine
44 River into the Moselle
45 Phoenician city
47 Enclose
49 Turk. title



OBITUARIES

Tammy Lynn Wilder

1964-2025

Tammy Lynn Wilder, 61, of Three Oaks, died peacefully, Tuesday, November 18, 2025 in the comfort of her family's presence.

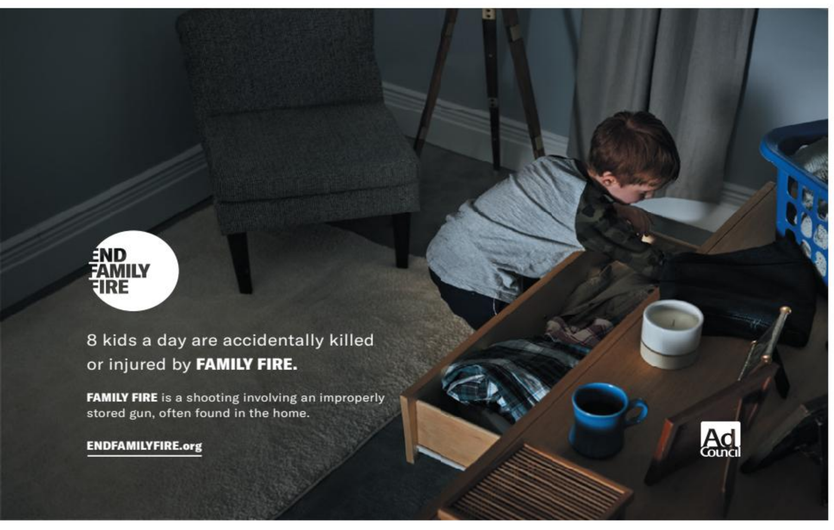
Her life began April 22, 1964 in Watervliet, the middle of five children raised by Earl Keith and Lorraine Merit.

Tammy's whole life was her family. She never met a stranger: always looking for laughter and community. Her favorite hobby was spending time with her grandchildren; teaching them, cherishing them, and loving them with her whole being.

Tammy will be greatly missed by family and friends. She is survived by her significant other, Tom McReynolds of Three Oaks; two daughters, Crystal (Johnson) Curry of Benton Harbor, Victoria Scott of South Bend, Indiana, seven grandchildren, Danielle, James, Kielyn, Madison, Natalie, Kinslie, Kayden; one sister, Liz Wilder of Arkansas; two brothers, David Wilder, Earl Keith, Jr., both of Arkansas; best friends, Bandit, Goldie; and a host of nieces, nephews, and cousins.

She was preceded in death by her parents and one brother Chuck Wilder

Family and friends will gather from 4:00 p.m. until the time of service at 5:00 p.m. on Monday, December 8, 2025. In Wagner Family Funerals 106 East Ash Street, Three Oaks, Michigan 49128.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LOCAL INTELLIGENCE New Buffalo Times — SINCE 1942 —

To Your Health

COLUMN BY KAREN EDWARDS ND

WHERE HAS ALL THE TESTOSTERONE GONE?

Just as women need estrogen as their dominant hormone, men need testosterone. Testosterone plays a vital role in numerous bodily functions in men. This hormone is responsible for muscle strength and growth,bone density, and stimulates the production of sperm as well as red blood cells. It is the hormone that influences libido and physical endurance, as well as cognitive function, energy levels, sleep quality, and even pain sensitivity. Low testosterone is also responsible for prostate inflammation. Maintaining optimal testosterone levels is essential for men's physical, emotional, sexualand mental well-being. It impacts nearly every aspect of men's health.

This is why there are so many fertility clinics around the world. The hormone levels have dived so severely, that conceiving is often difficult for many couples.

So, what happened why men are so deficient in this hormone? It is typical that men decline in this hormone as they age, just like women decline in estrogen. But it should not be to the degree that it is today, and young men should certainly not be low in testosterone.

Modern factors have decreased hormones in the human species. Today, we have so many health issues like metabolic syndrome, diabetes, obesity, chronic stress,medications, environmental toxins like BPA's, use of birth control, and top of the list is poor diet. Chemicals in food and highly processing it, alter and destroy hormones. This has affected both men and women.

My clinic was filled with couples that could not conceive. Their medical doctors sent them to me because I had a reputation to turn infertility around in using only natural modalities and changing diets. I treated the cause, not the symptoms. Ridding smoking, alcohol, sugar and trans fats. Putting them on high living foods and exercise.

One of my favorite additions for men once they got their diet correct, was pine pollen. Pine pollen is a natural supplement that rose to fame years ago due to itstestosterone boosting qualities. It is the yellow powder produced by the male cones of pine trees. It offers plant-based DHEA hormones called Phyto androgens. This is a natural plant steroid. If you think about it, the pollen is actually the sperm of a pine tree. Without the pine pollen, pine trees could not reproduce. Pine pollen offers over 200 bioactive nutritional compounds, testosterone being up on top. This makes it one of natures most concentrated superfoods.

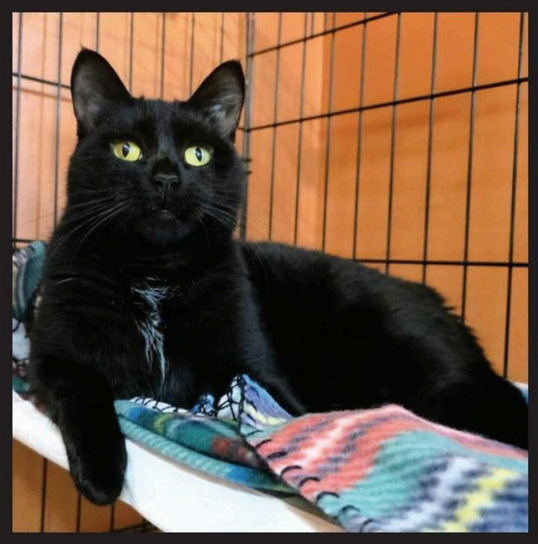
Women also need a balanced amount of testosterone. Not as much as men, but we need it also for muscle strength, sleep and inflammation.

Men experiencing low libido or issues with erectile dysfunction can benefit by using pine pollen daily. Address your meds and correct your diet as well.

When looking for pine pollen, do your own research. If you are on medications, find out if this is right for you. Also, make sure you are getting a high-quality product. In the spring when the pollen is flying, you can put a bag over them, shake the branch and collect your own. Nature offers what we need.

Disclaimer: Everything here is for nutritional education and is not meant to diagnose, treat prevent or cure. See your doctor when you have questions.

PET OF THE WEEK



RAIN

Rain is funny, relational, cuddly-once-she-knows-you, and loves feathers and catnip. She is almost three-years-old, and weighs around 10 pounds. She would need to be the sole pet in the house, and not very good with children. Rain is spayed, and her vaccinations are up-to-date. Once she gets to know you, she'll be just like her fur color—your shadow when not on your lap. Make Rain part of your home today.

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New Buffalo Times
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PUBLIC NOTICES

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KIMBERLY WOLNIK
CLERK-TREASURER

Fresh breakfast treats are offered at Angela's Provisions

Chamber members cut the ribbon with Angela's Provisions co-owners John Benz and Kevin Metz

Ribbon is cut on Angela's Provisions in New Buffalo

BY FRANCESCA SAGALA

Seeing as how they both frequented the area for more than 20 years, Kevin Metz said he and Angela's Provisions co-owner John Benz shared the same vision for opening a business in New Buffalo: a local market that's close to the beach that has fresh, artisan sandwiches and soups and salads - like a "mini, neighborhood bodega."

"It's really just offering a nice grocery and sandwich deli resource to the community," Metz said.

Having done a soft opening at the end of July, Angela's marked nearly six months of being open with a Harbor Country Chamber of Commerce ribbon-cutting Friday, Dec. 5.

Metz said Angela's gourmet grab-and-go concept allows residents and visitors to stop by for breakfast, lunch or a quick bite, while on their way to the beach or back to the house with friends, the office or out on the water. For those who want to dine in, there's limited counter seating, a communal table and a garden patio that's open in the warmer months.

Those who are on the run can call ahead of time.

The gourmet market offers a wide variety of homemade meals to go, cheeses, snacks, treats and beverages, in addition to curated gifts for a quick snack or locally curated items for a birthday, housewarming or dinner party gift.

Offering affordable, gourmet options year-round is a goal. Metz said many breakfast and lunch items, like croissants, stuffed biscuits, handheld chicken pot pies, curated soups and snacks, are priced $10 or less.

Current menu highlights include stuffed peppers, shrimp and sausage over jasmine rice, lasagna and Shepherd's and chicken pies.

Benz said that Angela's now offers house-made, prepared meals to take home and heat up.

He added that they hope to be a part of not only New Buffalo but the surrounding communities.

"To be established in the community and have people come and visit us from surrounding towns - and we're already seeing that happen - that's what our goal is: To be part of this Harbor Country community and provide healthy, good meals," Benz said, adding that they're always open to suggestions on menu items.

Metz met co-owner Benz through mutual friends and contacts throughout the industry in Chicago. A former marketing and design executive who's originally from Washington, D.C., Metz handles the marketing and front-of-the-house items. A Chicago native who resides with his wife, Mara, who has Michigan roots, Benz is a former chef and food industry veteran for more than 25 years and is the mastermind behind the fresh recipes on the ever-rotating menu.

Since Angela is the namesake of Metz's grandmother, who came through Brooklyn from Calabria, Italy, Metz said that the menu has an "Italian slant" to it. (The A logo is from her handwriting when signing her name.)

"We're excited to offer great Italian meats and different Italian recipes," he said.

Metz and Benz said their staff has also shaped Angela's Provisions to what it is today.

"We've gone through iterations of concepts, builders, design...It's just great to finally see this come to fruition," Metz said.

Angela's Provisions is located at 225 North Whittaker St. in New Buffalo and is currently open seven days a week year-round, with breakfast from 8 – 11 a.m. and lunch 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Monday through Saturday and from 8 a.m. to noon Sundays for breakfast items. A full menu can be viewed at angelasprovisions.com. For daily special and new items, visit angelasprovisions on Facebook and @angelasprovisions on Instagram. For ordering ahead of time, call 269-231-5122.

HIKERS TO EXPLORE EDWARD AND ELIZABETH LEONARD WILDLIFE PRESERVE

On the winter solstice, the Northern Hemisphere experiences its shortest day and longest night, marking the official start of "Astronomical Winter," so make every minute count by hiking with the Harbor Country Hikers (HCH) at Leonard Wildlife Preserve.

The hike will be led by Pat Fisher, HCH President, in one of COL's more accessible preserves. This easy to moderate 1.75-mile hike begins at 1 p.m. Dec. 20 and should last about two hours.

HCH has an All-Terrain Rollator which may be reserved for use on our hikes. Reservations are made on a first-come first-served basis by filling out the brief form at https://harborcountryhikers.org/rollator.

Chikaming Open Lands Edward and Elizabeth Leonard Wildlife Preserve protects 108 acres along Lakeside Road in Chikaming Township. The property consists of mature woodland, wetlands, and agricultural land. Some of that land is still in production today. The northern third of the Preserve has not been farmed since at least the 1930s (if ever), which has allowed a mature forest to develop with trees that could be over 100 years old.

Although membership is preferred, all are welcome to attend this hike. Dress for the weather, wear a sun hat and sturdy shoes or boots, preferred pest controls and bring plenty of water.

For more information, including driving directions to the Leonard Wildlife Preserve visit the Hikers' website, www.harborcountryhikers.org, or its Facebook page. — STAFF REPORTS

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